

# A SIMPLE GUIDE TO

## *the Holy Days*

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### CHRISTMAS EVE (A LITURGY FOR HOLY COMMUNION)

“Dearly beloved: Today, our Savior is born! Let us rejoice! Sadness should have no place on the birthday of life! The fear of death has been swallowed up, and life brings us joy with the promise of eternal gladness! No one is shut out from this joy! All share the same reason for rejoicing, for our Lord, victor over sin and death, finding no one free from sin, came to free us all!” (Leo the Great)

Let us, therefore, bow and humbly confess our sins to our heavenly Father.

Almighty and most merciful Father: We have gone wrong and have strayed from Your ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the ways and wants of our own hearts, and we have broken Your covenant. We have failed to do what we ought to have done, and we have done things we ought not to have done. O Lord, have mercy on us. Spare us as we confess our faults, and restore us as we repent from our sins, according to Your promises to us in Your Son, Christ Jesus, our Lord. And, O Lord, for His sake, enable us to live a godly, righteous, and honorable life— to the glory of Your holy name. Almighty God, before whom all hearts are open, to whom all desires are known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Your Holy Spirit so that we may completely love You and may rightly honor Your holy name— through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Fear not, but rejoice. For the Lord, who is faithful and just, promises to forgive those who confess their sins and to purify His children from all unrighteousness. Give thanks, for the Lord is good! His love endures forever!

On this night in which we remember, celebrate, and proclaim our Lord's incarnate birth, we remember, celebrate, and proclaim that He was born for our sakes so that He might redeem us from all sin by giving Himself to us as the Bread of Life. The eternal and only-begotten Son clothed Himself in our flesh and was sent into the world by the Father as a ransom for sinners. His body was broken and His blood was shed for the life of the world. Even so, He gives Himself to us, inviting us to feast on Him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving as we partake of this bread and this cup of His blessing.